

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus capable of processing a specimen having two or more layers, at least one of which includes NiFe or NiFeCo alloy, the magnetic property of which is deteriorated if the specimen is heated above 230 °C, and which is laminated on a substrate, the apparatus comprising:

an etching process unit, which is supplied with a gas that can produce a high density gas plasma of a low ion energy with the gas and which can perform etching of the specimen laminated on the substrate, with the produced high density plasma gas while controlling the temperature of the specimen below 200°C;

a rinsing unit including a rinsing cup that can perform rinsing with a liquid in the rinsing cup of an exposed surface by the etching of the lamination layer including the NiFe or NiFeCo alloy, so as to wash out substantial corrosive elements on the exposed surface, immediately after the etching; and

a dryer unit including a hot plate that can perform drying of the rinsed surface of the lamination layer including the NiFe or NiFeCo alloy immediately after the rinsing thereof, by placing the lamination layer on the hot plate while controlling the temperature of the hot plate so as to keep the temperature of the specimen below 200 °C; and

at least one transfer unit for transferring the specimen from the dryer unit to the etching process unit, wherein said etching process unit can further perform in succession etching of the dried surface of the lamination layer including the NiFe or NiFeCo alloy with a high density gas plasma of a low ion energy while controlling the temperature of the specimen below 200 °C.

2. (Currently amended) An apparatus for processing a specimen according to claim 1, ~~further comprising wherein the at least one transfer unit comprises:~~

an atmospheric loader of the specimen laminated on the substrate; a vacuum transport unit having a vacuum transport robot therein; and unload and load lock chambers connecting between said atmospheric loader and said vacuum transport unit for delivering the specimen via an atmospheric transport unit, wherein

said vacuum transport unit is connected to an etching process chamber of said etching process unit, and

said atmospheric loader is connected via said atmospheric transport unit to the rinsing cup and hot plate provided in said rinsing and dryer units.

3. (previously presented) An apparatus for processing a specimen according to claim 2, wherein plural etching process chambers are provided in said etching processing unit.

4. (new) An apparatus for processing a specimen according to claim 1, wherein plural etching process chambers are provided in said etching processing unit.

5. (new) An apparatus capable of processing a specimen having two or more layers, at least one of which includes NiFe or NiFeCo alloy, the magnetic property of which is deteriorated if the specimen is heated above 230 °C, and which is laminated on a substrate, the apparatus comprising:

an etching process unit, which is supplied with a gas that can produce a high density gas plasma of a low ion energy with the gas and which can perform etching of the specimen laminated on the substrate, with the produced high density plasma gas while controlling the temperature of the specimen below 200°C;

a rinsing unit including a rinsing cup that can perform rinsing with a liquid in the rinsing cup of an exposed surface by the etching of the lamination layer including the NiFe or NiFeCo alloy, so as to wash out substantial corrosive elements on the exposed surface, immediately after the etching;

a dryer unit including a hot plate that can perform drying of the rinsed surface of the lamination layer including the NiFe or NiFeCo alloy immediately after the rinsing thereof, by placing the lamination layer on the hot plate while controlling the temperature of the hot plate so as to keep the temperature of the specimen below 200 °C; and

at least one transfer means for transferring the specimen from the dryer unit to the etching process unit, wherein said etching process unit can further perform in succession etching of the dried surface of the lamination

layer including the NiFe or NiFeCo alloy with a high density gas plasma of a low ion energy while controlling the temperature of the specimen below 200 °C.

6. (new) An apparatus for processing a specimen according to claim 1, wherein the at least one transfer means comprises:
  - an atmospheric loader of the specimen laminated on the substrate;
  - a vacuum transport unit having a vacuum transport robot therein; and
  - unload and load lock chambers connecting between said atmospheric loader and said vacuum transport unit for delivering the specimen via an atmospheric transport unit, wherein
    - said vacuum transport unit is connected to an etching process chamber of said etching process unit, and
    - said atmospheric loader is connected via said atmospheric transport unit to the rinsing cup and hot plate provided in said rinsing and dryer units.

7. (new) An apparatus for processing a specimen according to claim 6, wherein plural etching process chambers are provided in said etching processing unit.

8. (new) An apparatus for processing a specimen according to claim 5, wherein plural etching process chambers are provided in said etching processing unit.